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SIPDIS

WHA/CCA FOR GZAMBRANO, EUR/CE FOR JBERGEMANN

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TAGS: [CU](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [EZ](#) [PREF](#) [XG](#)
SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC: REVIEW FOR WAIVER OF TITLE III OF
THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: PRAGUE 258

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Charles O. Blaha; Reasons 1
.4 b and d.

11. (U) The Czech Republic has a strong record of active engagement and support for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cuba. Former Czech President Vaclav Havel established the Czech government's principled position on Cuba during his administration, following the Czech Republic's own transition from a totalitarian regime in 1989.

All subsequent Czech political leaders have continued this policy of support for the peaceful democratic dissident movement in Cuba and have consistently called for the release of all political prisoners. The Czech Republic remains steadfast in calling for Cuba to release all political prisoners, open dialogue with the opposition and hold a free election. The MFA Department for Human Rights and Transition Policy maintains Cuba as one of its "priority countries," and thus provides financial assistance to Czech NGOs, such as People in Need, which provides humanitarian aid, capacity training and other support for journalists, dissidents and their families.

Czech Engagement within the EU

2.(C) Within the EU, the Czech Republic remains one of our strongest and most vocal allies on human rights issues, particularly with respect to Cuba. In the last year, the Czechs have hosted public events with dissidents from Cuba and Burma. Since our last update, the Czech Republic has concluded its EU Presidency, which covered the first six months of 2009. In this role the Czechs walked a fine line between expressing bilateral views and representing the consensus of the 27 EU member states. Because of their obligations as EU President, the Czechs met this year with Cuban government officials. As noted in Reftel, on May 11 Czech FM Jan Kohout met with Cuban FM Rodriguez and with Cuban officials attending the EU-RIO group in Prague. There have not been any subsequent high-level meetings since this last report. Within the EU the Czechs continue to urge other EU member states to keep the pressure on the Cuban regime to implement reforms. As well, the Czechs remain among the strongest advocates of inviting Cuban dissidents to EU member state national day festivities.

No Substantive Czech Trade or Investment

13. (U) The Czech Republic does not have any foreign investments in Cuba. As an EU member state, the GOCR does not have bilateral trade agreements with any country, including Cuba. There are, however, no trade restrictions on private companies that want to do business in Cuba. According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MPO), in

2007, the Czech Republic exported USD 19.5 million worth of goods to Cuba and imported USD 4.1 million worth of goods from Cuba. In 2008, the Czech Republic exported USD 21,8 million worth of goods and imported USD 4.6 million. During the first nine months of 2009, Czech exports to Cuba totalled only USD 7.0 million while imports from Cuba reached USD 3.4 million. There are no student exchange programs.

14. (C) Comment: A waiver of the right to bring an action against entities and nationals of the Czech Republic is necessary to U.S. national interests. The Czech Republic has been at the forefront of efforts to force the Cuban regime to meet international standards of human rights. Our cooperation would definitely be negatively affected if the GOCR were to lose the Title III waiver, especially since it has been one of our best partners on Cuba. Within the EU, the Czechs have one of the highest profiles on promotion of human rights issues around the world.
Thompson-Jones